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## Verbal art as heuristic for semantic analyses How non-prosodic poetic structure in the verbal art of Muylaq' Aymara (Muylaque, Peru) reveals semantic categories

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**ABSTRACT:** Aymara is an Amerindian language spoken mainly in Peru and Bolivia. To date, relatively little is documented about Aymara verbal art. Accordingly, we analyze a traditional song recorded in the Peruvian highlands. We provide a musical and linguistic analysis of the non-prosodic poetic song structure. We detail the octosyllabic, homeoteleutonic (that is, the final words in a line have the same endings) strategies for line formation, the melodic and rhythmic characteristics, and outline the syntactic, morphological, and semantic strategies used in forming semantic couplets. This reveals semantic categories which would not be apparent in a traditional linguistic analysis. Furthermore, the musical analysis confirms previous works on the misperception of a musical anacrusis. We conclude that rigorous, scientific analyses of verbal art require consideration of the construction of meaning through practice and dialog.

**KEYWORDS:** Aymara; Anacrusis; Verbal art; Semantic couplets; Semantic categories; Poetic structure.

**RESUMO:** O Aimará é uma língua que é falada principalmente no Peru e na Bolívia. Até o momento, relativamente pouco foi documentado sobre a arte verbal aimará. Nesse sentido, analisamos uma canção tradicional gravada no altiplano peruano. Oferecemos uma análise musical e linguística da estrutura poética não prosódica da canção. Fornecemos detalhes sobre as figuras retóricas / literárias utilizadas para a produção / formação dos versos: a) o verso octossilábico, b) o homeoteleuton (este último é uma figura retórica que consiste na semelhança no final das palavras finais dos versos) e c) as características melódicas e rítmicas. Também delineamos as estratégias sintáticas, morfológicas e semânticas utilizadas/usadas/presentes na formação dos pares semânticos. Isto revela categorias semânticas que não seriam evidentes / não se manifestariam em uma análise linguística tradicional. Além disso, a análise musical confirma as observações de trabalhos anteriores sobre a percepção equivocada

de uma anacruse musical. Concluímos que análises rigorosas e científicas da arte verbal requerem considerar a construção de significados por meio da prática e do diálogo.

**Palavras-chave:** Aimará; Anacruse; Arte verbal; Dísticos semânticos; Categorias semânticas; Estrutura poética.

## 1. Introduction

In this contribution, we analyze a single bounded speech event, a song recorded in the Centro Poblado of Muylaque<sup>1</sup> in the Moqueguan highlands (S16° 40.481'; W070° 42.661'; appx. 3,200m above sea level in the district of San Cristóbal de Calacoa in Mariscal Nieto province, in the department of Moquegua, in Southern Peru). The song is sung on this occasion by Maria Marleni Flores Mamani, known locally as “Justa Flores”, she is the mother of one of the co-authors. The song, which, like other traditional verbal art (narratives, songs, poems, etc.) in the Andes, is not referred to by any specific name in the community, is referred to by its main character, “Añasita” (Little Skunk) throughout this paper. A transcription, analysis and translation of each line in the song can be found in Appendix 1.

To illustrate how a study of verbal art can be a heuristic for linguistic analysis, we perform a detailed analysis of the Añasita song structure that permits us to identify semantic categories of the language which would otherwise be impossible to observe. This insight into semantics is valuable “since semantic couplets reflect speakers’ cognitive representations of word meaning, they also illuminate the linguistic and cultural organization of word meanings” (Mannheim 1998: 240). Semantic couplets can thus be said to “supply the ethnographer with a natural context within which tacit, but culturally significant aspects of word meaning can be observed” (*ibid*).

We show how the patterns of organization on formal and semantic levels in this song convey verbal art (also known as “literary text” as in Fabb 2017), described by Levin (1962: 30) as “... using equivalent positions as settings for equivalent phonic and/or semantic elements”. This includes, rhyme, rhythm, meter, alliteration, syntactic/morphological patterns, the use of motifs, and so on. Verbal art often does not receive the attention it warrants, especially in studies of the indigenous languages of the Americas, although there are some notable extensions (for the Andes: Turino 1989; Arnold & Yapita 1998; Stobart 2006; Arnold 2014). The study of verbal art entails considering a “special kind of verbal behavior” (Fabb 2017: 448), and so is of interest to linguists. In the case of song as verbal art that is set to music, or, as is the case with this piece, sung, it is also of interest to ethnomusicologists as well as to artists and those interested in the variety of artistic productions. However, the division between linguistics and ethnomusicology is not black-and-white. There is a relationship between linguistic and music form in the structure of the song, which we also explore in this contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> In the literature, such verbal art traditions are grouped together under the reductive aegis of “parallelism”, broadly definable as “non-Western, non-prosodic poetic structure”. For a detailed summary of parallelism to account for traditions of the Ancient Hebrews (Lowth 1829 [1753]: 35; Herder 1782), the Mayan Popol Vuh (Tedlock 1974), the Cantares mexicanos in Nahuatl (Karttunen and Lockhart 1980) and Russian folksong (Jakobson 1966), among others (Fox 1977), see also Mannheim’s account (1998: 245-247), where he discusses the term in detail. But see also the more nuanced definition in Fabb (2017: 462) of parallelism as “a relationship of partial identity between two sections of a text”. Fabb (*ibid*) recognizes three kinds of parallelism: syntactic, phonological and lexical. According to the definitions he provides, this song exhibits all three types of parallelism.

In Aymara, much like the case described for Southern Peruvian Quechua (Mannheim 1998), verbal art relies on syntactic patterns and word meanings more so than on rhyme or meter, which are so prominent in European poetic and music tradition. This is because Aymara words constructed by attaching suffixes to a root. The suffixes can inflect the word (for grammatical person, number, case, tense, aspect, etc.), derive a new word, or even change the category of a word from a noun to a verb and vice-versa. As an illustration, consider the word in (1), which is comprised of a nominal root attached with seven suffixes. The two closest to the root, *juma* ‘you’ are both inflectional. The first, *-naka*, pluralizes, *juma-naka* ‘you all’. The second, *-mpi*, inflects the word into the comitative case (giving it a meaning like English ‘with’), *juma-naka-mpi* ‘with you all’. Thereafter, the word is verbalized with the transpositional copulative verbalizer (which makes a noun into a verb), represented with the symbol *-v*. Now that the resulting word is a verb, it is inflected into the progressive aspect, marked with the emphatic stem external word-level suffix *-puni*, receives first person future tense inflection, and finally the declarative phrase-final suffix *-wa*.

- (1) *juma-naka-mpi-v-s.ka-puni-ja-w*  
 you-PL-COM-COP.VBZ-PROG-EM-1FUT-DECL  
 ‘I will always be with you all really.’  
 (Coler 2014: xii)

Morphological alternations, then, allow a tremendous flexibility of how words can fit a metrical scheme. The situation is similar for Quechua, where meter likewise is hardly used for aesthetic purposes—the language is so metrically regular that regular metrical patterns do not convey poetic meaning (Beyersdorff 1986: 223). In Quechua and Aymara, then, verbal art does not typically involve the patterning of sounds or precise metrical schemes, but instead makes use of the patterning of meaning (Mannheim 1998: 245, cf. Pigott’s 2013 description of Quechua song).<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1 The people and language of Muylaque

Of the 200 or so citizens of Muylaque, less than a dozen are completely fluent in Aymara. The majority of the fluent speakers are elderly, monolingual women. Male seniors generally speak Spanish together but contextually code-switch to/from Aymara. Most adults between the ages of 30 and 50 have a passive knowledge of the language and understand it, but will usually respond to Aymara questions in Spanish. The majority of teenagers and young adults understand some basic Aymara but always respond in Spanish. Children are monolingual Spanish speakers. No new parents speak Aymara with their children, so far as we are aware.

The relative geographic isolation of Muylaque meant that the traditional way of life and linguistic tendencies survived longer in this community than they may have in other Moqueguan villages closer to the capital. According to local linguistic consultants, it was only in about 1960 that regular trade with communities situated beyond a day’s walk away was established. The first public school in the town came in the early 1980s.

The Añasita song is sung in the Aymara language, which is spoken in a region encompassing Bolivia and Peru from north of Lake Titicaca to south of Lake Poopó, extending westward to the valleys of the Pacific coast and eastward to the Yungas valleys. It has roughly two million speakers, most of whom reside in Bolivia and Peru, with a few small communities in Chile and Argentina. The structure of the local Aymara variety is known as Muylaq’ Aymara, is described in Coler (2014).

Prior to exploring the formal and semantic details of the Añasita song, it is worthwhile to make some remarks regarding the form of the song. This is not an easy task. Unlike language description, song description presents unique challenges insofar as song is not, strictly speaking, a linguistic or a musical object, but has characteristics of both. In brief, the Añasita song is comprised of 21 lines organized into stanzas. Each line is octosyllabic (that is, it is comprised of eight syllables), and homeoteleutonic (that is, the final words in a line have the same endings and are “near-rhymes”, as is common in Latin rhetoric and poetry). Each line is a single grammatical phrase. Pairs of lines act as semantic couplets (with the exception of line 19, which does not form a semantic couplet). The first six lines describe Little Skunk’s ill-fated search for good worms. The rest are dedicated to extolling the importance of song, dance and life, connecting by analogy to Little Skunk’s search.

After providing a brief overview of the transcription conventions used in writing, glossing, and translating the Aymara text (in 1.2), the remainder of this article explores the structure of the lines and stanzas (in 2), focusing on the octosyllabic, homeoteleutonic strategies for lines formation (in 2.1 and 2.2, respectively) and the phrase structure (in 2.3). Thereafter, we give an overview of the melodic structure of the song (in 3.1) and rhythmic structure (in 3.2) before describing the two strategies used to form semantic coupling (in 4). Then, we describe the four semantic motifs in the song (in 5) and wrap up with some concluding remarks (in 6).

## 1.2 Transcription conventions

We transcribe the Aymara of this song using the Alfabeto Unificado, which is modeled on Spanish orthography. An overview of the consonants is provided in Table 1. There are only three vowels in Aymara: **a**, **i**, **u**. Unlike other varieties of Aymara, the one in which this song is sung, Muylaq’ Aymara, does not have long vowels.

		bilabial	alveolar	palatal	velar	uvular
stop	plain	p	t	ch	k	q
	aspirated	ph	th	chh	kh	qh
	glottal	p’	t’	ch’	k’	q’
fricative			s		j	x
lateral			l	ll		
nasal		m	n	ñ		
glide		w		y		
flap			r			

**Table 1.** Aymara Consonants

In cases where a structural or semantic analysis is required, the transcription of an excerpt from the song is given in three rows, as in 2, which is the first line from the Añasita song. In the topmost row, the Aymara words are transcribed. Words are split into morphemes with hyphens. According to Aymara word structure, the first morpheme is the root. The others that follow are suffixes. In the second row, we provide a gloss of the morphemes.<sup>2</sup> The third row is comprised of a free translation. To the right of the free translation, the line number is given in brackets (for examples that are taken directly from the song). For the complete song, see Appendix 1.

- (2) Aña-sita-w                      jiwa-tayna-y.  
       skunk-DIM-DECL       die-3REM-EXC  
       ‘Skunk died.’ [1]

## 2 Line structure

The 21 lines in this song are split into ten stanzas, most of which form semantic couplets. The singular exception being line 19, which does not form a stanza. With the exception of line 3 and 4, each line has exactly eight syllables and each stanza is homeoteleutonic. The line pairs are analyzable as having a semantic relationship. In the subsections, we describe the octosyllabic (2.1) and homeoteleutonic (2.2) characteristics of the lines that comprise the stanzas.

### 2.1 Octosyllabic lines

Each line has eight syllables,<sup>3</sup> as described in 3, where each “σ” represents a singular syllable and words are delineated between brackets. 3 provides the two line formation structures, according to which those eight syllables are distributed into two words (each of four syllables) or three words (the first two of which have two syllables, and the third word has four). These two structures are exemplified in 4 and 5, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviations used in the second line of the interlinear gloss follow: ACC ‘accusative case’; AD ‘additive independent suffix’; AG ‘agentive nominalizer’; ALL ‘allative case’; ANMZ ‘action nominalizer’; ATT attributive; BFR ‘buffer’; CAUS ‘causative’; CFY ‘confirmatory’; COM ‘comitative case’; COP.VBZ ‘copulative verbalizer’; CPL ‘completive aspect’; DECL ‘declarative’; DIM ‘diminutive suffix’; DIS ‘distal past tense’; DL ‘delimitative’; EM ‘emphatic’; EXC ‘exclamatory’; FEM ‘feminine gender’; FUT ‘future tense’; GEN/LOC ‘genitive locative case’; IMP ‘imperative mood’; IRR ‘interrogative’; LI ‘limitative’; M ‘momentaneous aspect’; NCPL ‘non-completive aspect’; NEG/IRR ‘negative/interrogative’; PL ‘plural’; POSS ‘possessive’; PRES.CF ‘present counterfactual mood’; PDF ‘perifactive’; PRP ‘propagative aspect’; PROG ‘progressive aspect’; RE ‘resultative aspect’; REM ‘remote past tense’; SIM ‘simple tense’; SUBR ‘subordinator’; TOP ‘topicalizer’; UW ‘upward directional’; VBZ ‘verbalizer’; 1 first person; 1INC first person inclusive; 2 second person; 3 third person.

<sup>3</sup> The Aymara syllable is a difficult topic to summarize, mainly because underlying forms can differ significantly from the surface form. This owes to complex vowel deletion processes which may create strings of consonants that never occur underlyingly. Most syllables are underlyingly CV, but V, C, and CCV are also attested. There is an impressive range of possible surface syllables. The Aymara syllable is examined in detail in Coler (2014: 60).

## (3) Octosyllabic line formation structures:

Structure 1:

[ $\sigma_1 \sigma_2 \sigma_3 \sigma_4$ ]word<sub>1</sub> [ $\sigma_1 \sigma_2 \sigma_3 \sigma_4$ ] word<sub>2</sub>

Structure 2:

[ $\sigma_1 \sigma_2$ ]word<sub>1</sub> [ $\sigma_1 \sigma_2$ ]word<sub>2</sub> [ $\sigma_1 \sigma_2 \sigma_3 \sigma_4$ ]word<sub>3</sub>

Lines that can exemplify structure 1 follow:

## (4) Lines that adhere to structure 1

Line 1: [ $a_1$ -ñ $a_2$ -si $_3$ -ta $_4$ ]word<sub>1</sub> [ $ji_1$ -wa $_2$ -tay $_3$ -nay $_4$ ]word<sub>2</sub>

‘The skunk died.’

Lines that conform to structure 2 always have three words:

## (5) Line that adheres to structure 2

[ $ja_1$ -kan $_2$ ]word<sub>1</sub> [ $wi_1$ -ray $_2$ ]word<sub>2</sub> [ $am_1$ -ta $_2$ -si $_3$ -na $_4$ ]word<sub>3</sub>

‘Remembering eternal life.’ [18]

As was mentioned previously, the exception to this template is the semantic pair in lines 3 and 4 (the lines in this couplet are identical), the lines of which are each seven syllables. Lines 3 and 4 resemble structure 2 in that they have three words. But the syllable count of the line is seven. This is because the last word has three syllables instead of four. As will be explored in 2.3, this is also the only line that lacks a verbal root (a few lines have only nominalized verbs, but this is the only one which has no verb at all). It is transcribed in 6, with hyphens represented the syllable divisions (indicated with subscript) and brackets representing word divisions (also indicated with subscripts).

(6) [ $la_1$ -qay $_2$ ]word<sub>1</sub> [ $la_1$ -qay $_2$ ]word<sub>2</sub> [ $tay_1$ -pi $_2$ -ruy $_3$ ]word<sub>3</sub>

‘Between the ruins.’ [3+4]

Aymara stress is predictable and is always on the penultimate underlying vowel. However, as a consequence of vowel deletion rules in the language, there is some variation on where it is realized in a given word. In some cases, stress assignment occurs prior to vowel deletion, and in other cases it does not.<sup>4</sup> For example, consider a word like *u, tachnu, qasijwiphiritay' naw* ‘they used to make houses’, in which stress falls on the ultimate vowel (in this, and other examples in this section, the symbol ['] marks primary stress and [,] secondary stress). This is because in this context there is an underlying vowel /a/ following [w] at the end of the word which is not realized during production *u, tachnu, qasijwiphiritay' naw(a)*.

Another illustration of the interplay between vowel deletion and stress assignment is evident in noun phrases comprised of a modifier followed by a vowel-initial head noun. For example, consider the modifier *ch'i yara* ‘black’ modifying the head *'anu* ‘dog’. In

<sup>4</sup> Put differently, stress is assigned on the underlying penultimate syllable, and the language is phonetically stress-timed because of the morphophonemic coalescences.

such phrases, the final vowel of the modifier is obligatorily deleted, *ch'i'yar(a)* 'anu 'black dog', though the stress assignment does not change; the underlying penultimate syllable remains stressed. For more on stress patterns in Aymara see Coler (2014: 46). For more on vowel deletion in Aymara see Coler et al. (2020).

An overview of the syllable count of each line in the song is provided in Table 2. Each row is a line of the song and each column contains a word, with the “σ” symbol representing a syllable in a given word. A bold “σ” indicates the location of word stress, described in more detail after the table. Note that lines 3 and 4 are each 7 syllables. The alternating lines are divided into shaded and unshaded rows. Shaded rows are sung in high melody and unshaded rows are sung in low melody. The background shading has the additional feature of showing semantic couplets. That is, consecutive lines with the same background shading are couplets. Observe that line 19, which is sung in low melody, is not part of a semantic pair. We return to this later.

Line	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3
1	σσσσ	σσσσ	
2	σσσσ	σσσσ	
3	σσ	σσ	σσσ
4	σσ	σσ	σσσ
5	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
6	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
7	σσσσ	σσσσ	
8	σσσσ	σσσσ	
9	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
10	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
11	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
12	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
13	σσσσ	σσσσ	
14	σσσσ	σσσσ	
15	σσσσ	σσσσ	
16	σσσσ	σσσσ	
17	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
18	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
19	σσσσ	σσσσ	
20	σσ	σσ	σσσσ
21	σσ	σσ	σσσσ

**Table 2.** Syllable Structures for Each Line of the Añasita Song.

## 2.2 Homeoteleutonic lines

Each pair of octosyllabic lines are homeoteleutonic, as they have an identical final syllable (indeed, some lines are completely identical, as we saw for [3+4]). As stress



is assigned to the penultimate syllable in Aymara, and rhyme is perceived in stressed syllables, homeoteleutons in this language do not rhyme. However, the lines do have what may be considered an echo.

Examples of homeoteleutonic line pairs follow in 7, preceded by the line number in the song. To facilitate the comparison, we have aligned the morphemes. Observe the regularity with which each word ends in (near-)identical sounds. In [7] and [11], there is a suffix *-t'a* which does not occur in the second line [8] and [12]. This inflectional-like suffix marks the momentaneous aspect. From a structural perspective, suffixation occurs, at least in part, because the verb root to which it attaches is monosyllabic (*jiw-* 'die' in [7] and *wirs-* 'sing' in [11]) whereas the verb in the second line, which lacks *-t'a*, is bisyllabic (*chaqa-* 'become lost' in [8] and *thuqa-* 'dance' in [12]). The addition of this morpheme, then, makes the syllable counts match.

(7) Aligned homeoteleutonic lines

01. Aña -sita -w jiwa -tayna -y  
'Skunk died.'
02. Aña -sita -y chaqa -tayna -y  
'Skunk became lost.'
07. Uk -jam -pun -jay jiw -t'a -wj -ch -itan  
'Just like that do we die.'
08. Uk -jam -pun -jay chaqa -wj -ch. -itan  
'Just like that do we become lost.'
09. Suma wirsu -ñ thaqa -sina -y  
'When searching for good song.'
10. Suma thuqu. -ñ thaqa -sina -y  
'When searching for good dance.'
11. Jiwa -ñ jaka -ñ wirs -t'a -jwa -tan  
'We sing life and death.'
12. Jiwa -ñ jaka -ñ thuqa -wa. -tan  
'We dance life and death.'
13. Thuqu -ña -sti awki -n -irki -t  
'Does dance have a father?'
14. Wirsu -ña -sti tayka -n -irki -t  
'Does song have a mother?'
15. Tayka -n -ipan -s may. -t'a -s -itan  
'And having a mother may it loan her.'
16. Awki -n -ipan -s may -t'a -s -itan  
'And having a father may it loan him.'

### 2.3 Phrase structure of the lines

In natural language, Aymara word order is exceptionally variable. Nonetheless, the syntactic structure of the phrases that comprise the lines in the song hardly vary. This is exemplified in Table 3, where each word in each line is classified as a noun (N), a verb (V), or a nominal modifier (MOD), which modify the noun that they precede.

Stanzas	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3
[1+2]	N	V	
[3+4]	N	N	N
[5+6]	MOD	N	N
[7+8]	N	V	
[9+10]	MOD	N	N
[11+12]	N	N	V
[13+14]	N	V	
[15+16]	N	V	
[17+18]	MOD	N	N
[19]	V	V	
[20+21]	MOD	N	V

**Table 3.** Phrase Structure of Lines in Stanzas

This table demonstrates that there are only a few phrase formation templates for each line. It also demonstrates that two lines which comprise a stanza always have an identical phrase formation template. Let us begin by looking at the two-word lines in stanzas [1+2], [7+8], [13+14], [15+16], and [19], before progressing to the three-word lines. These lines are all N+V, with the exception of line [19], example 8. Recall that this line is also the only one which is not part of a semantic couplet. It is comprised of two verbs, *wirs-* ‘sing’ and *thuq-* ‘dance’, occurring with identical inflectional morphology:

- (8) *Wirs-t’a-wa-tan*                      *thuq-t’a-wa-tan*  
       sing-M-BFR-1INC.SIM            dance-M-BFR-1INC.SIM  
       ‘We sing and dance.’ [19]

All other lines are comprised of three words. These lines can be grouped into three categories: 1) N+N+N (couplet [3+4]), 2) MOD+N+N (couplets [5+6], [9+10], and [17+18]), 3) N+N+V (couplet [11+12]), and MOD+N+V (couplet [20+21]). Let us look at these in more detail.

The verbless N+N+N line, which repeats in couplet [3+4], is provided in example 9 (recall that it was delineated into syllables in example 6). This template only occurs once in the song:

- (9) *laqay laqay*                      *taypi-ru-y*  
       ruins ruins                      center-ALL-EXC  
       ‘Between the ruins.’ [3+4]

The MOD+N+N from couplet [5+6], as provided in 10, is nearly identical to MOD+N+V constructions. The crucial difference is that in the former, the final verb is nominalized with *-sina*. Consequently, the word lacks tense, aspect or mood morphology, which is otherwise required of all Aymara verbs. That is, although the root *thaqa-* ‘search’ is a verb, the word *thaqa-sina* ‘when searching’ is a noun.

- (10) suma      laq’u-y      thaqa-sina-y  
 good    worm-EXC    search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good worms.’ [5+6]

Finally, examples of N+N+V and MOD+N+V templates is provided in 11 and 12, respectively. In the former, two consecutive nominalized verbs, *jiwa-n̄* ‘death’ and *jaka-n̄* ‘life’, precede the root *wirs-* ‘sing’. In the latter, the demonstrative *aka* ‘this’ modifies the head *kall* ‘street’, followed by the verb *pist’a-* ‘miss’.

- (11) Jiwa-n̄      jaka-n̄  
 die-ANMZ    live-ANMZ  
  
 wirs-t’a-jwa-tan  
 sing-M-BFR-1INCL.SIM  
 ‘We sing death and life.’ [11]

- (12) aka-y      kall-sa-y  
 this-EXC    street-AD-EXC  
  
 pist’a-y-ka-tan  
 miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
 ‘We will miss even this street.’ [20]

### 3. Musical structure

This section treats the musical structure of the Añasita song. The first subsection describes the melody and the second describes the rhythm.

#### 3.1 Melody

The stanzas of the song are sung on two different melodies, though the melody for the lines in each stanza are always identical (just as are the templates of the phrase structure, as described in 3.2). Each melody ends in the tonal center repeated three times (transcribed here as F#), with high pitch for the odd stanzas (figure 1), and low pitch for even stanzas (figure 2). Both lines in a stanza are sung in the same melody.



Figure 1. Example of odd stanza, line 1 (high melody).



Figure 2. Example of Even Stanza, Line 3 (Low Melody).

The song ends with three consecutive lines sung in low pitch melodies, including the outlier line 19 and the two last lines. As the final low pitch of the second melody gives an impression of answer or conclusion, this final part could be analyzed as a musical a “bis” or a coda that concludes the song.

### 3.2 Rhythm

The Añasita song is based mainly on a ternary type meter. It is composed of a typical ternary pattern - one eighth note and one quarter note - repeated four times by lines. It is noteworthy that despite the fact that lines in stanza [3+4] were the only ones which were not octosyllabic—instead being composed of seven syllables (see 6)—these lines are based on the same structure and two notes are sung on the same syllable.

However, the rhythm slightly differs in the lines in stanza [11+12] because 9 notes are sung. These two lines confirm the global feeling of a ternary type meter. This is illustrated in Figure (3).



Figure 3. Stanza 11 *Jiwañ jakañ wirst'ajwatan* ‘We Sing Life and Death.’.

In terms of time structure, the immediate impression for western listeners is likely to be an initial anacrusis. In a musical anacrusis, a note or a sequence of notes precedes the first downbeat. In the song, the downbeat could be thus perceived at the second note.

However, previous works showed that this Eurocentric point of view could be unsuitable for the analysis of Andean music.

The issue of the perception of the “Andean anacrusis” has been addressed from the early ethnomusical work of d’Harcourt et al. (1925). More recently, a study by Stobart and Cross (2000) highlights differences between Andean and western perception of the rhythm of the Andean songs. The authors showed that the first syllable of a phrase is treated as a functional “downbeat”, in contrast to the perception of non-indigenous, non-Andean “outsiders”. This analysis is based on the comparison between clapping of European subjects and the footfalls of indigenous Andean performers. Stobart and Cross carried out a listening experiment with Western European and Bolivian participants. They confirm that for “the Bolivian subjects, [the] first sound within a phrase appears to initiate and mark the pulse of the piece”.

Having studied a video recording of the dance rhythm performed to this recording, it appears that the first footstep is on the first note. This is in accordance the hypothesis defended by Stobart and Cross (2000). As expected, the perception of an anacrusis seems not to be relevant for Aymara, just as it is not for the Quechua.

Figure 4 shows a transcription of the beginning of the song, with no anacrusis. The lower stave shows the footfalls recorded by a native of Muylaque dancing to the song. In this new transcription, the stressed syllables are generally placed on the downbeat (compare stress assignment in each word in each line as summarized in Table 2 with Figure 4). For example, the stressed syllable of the first word *Añasitaw* ‘Little Skunk’ is placed on the second beat. The full transcription of the song is provided in Appendix 2.

The figure shows a musical transcription of the beginning of a song. It consists of three systems of staves. Each system has a voice staff (treble clef) and a footfalls staff (bass clef). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are written below the voice staff. The first system shows the first line of the song. The second system shows the second line, starting with a measure rest. The third system shows the third line, also starting with a measure rest. The footfalls staff shows the rhythm of the dance, with vertical lines indicating the footfalls.

Figure 4. Transcription of the Beginning of the Song, Without Anacrusis.

#### 4. Semantic Coupling

Semantic coupling is a poetic device characterized by repetitive patterning of lexical meaning, “in which two semantically related words appear in successive lines, in identical morphological contexts” (Mannheim 1998: 239). In musical tradition of the Quechua

waynu, for example, a song text may be organized into “two otherwise identical lines ... joined together by the alternation of two semantically related word stems” (Mannheim 1987: 276).

This is structurally similar to what we find in the Añasita song. Indeed, the two lines which comprise a stanza are always identical in “all but one morphological element, and share a common syntactic organization”. Distinct from the Quechua waynu, this semantic minimal pair sometimes, but not always, differs “by a single semantic property” where the order in which the two words occur “regulated by a hierarchy of values for the semantic property, which distinguishes the word pair”. We will return to this in 4.2 after dealing with semantic couplets in which each of the two lines is identical. For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that in this song, we find two methods for forming semantic couplets in stanzas:

Method 1: Repetition of the same lines in a stanza; and

Method 2: Lines in a stanza that differ only with respect to a single root, all other words and morphology remain identical.

Recall that in general there are two possible distributions of the syllables in an octosyllabic line: one with two words (each having four syllables) and the other with three words (where the first two each have two syllables and the last has four). All semantic couplets formed using Method 1, above, are comprised of lines with the three-word-distribution. Stanzas formed using Method 2 vary between two and three word lines.

The distribution of these two methods in the song is unbalanced. Method 1 is less common. The two methods do not alternate in any discernible pattern. A summary of the method used to form each stanza appears in the table below. The following two subsections describe each of these methods.

Stanza	Method 1	Method 2
[1+2]		x
[3+4]	x	
[5+6]	x	
[7+8]		x
[9+10]		x
[11+12]		x
[13+14]		x
[15+16]		x
[17+18]	x	
[19]		x
[20+21]		x

**Table 4.** Couplet Formation Methods Per Stanza.

#### 4.1 Semantic coupling Method 1: Identical lines in a stanza

The first method used to form stanzas is the simplest insofar as it involves the repetition of the same lines.<sup>5</sup> Thus, as indicated in Table 4, the stanzas in [3+4], [5+6], and [17+18] are made up of identical lines. None of the stanzas repeat in the song. Take as an example the first two stanzas comprised lines [3+4] and [5+6], provided below in examples (13) and (14), respectively. These lines are a continuation of the stanza [1+2]: ‘Skunk died / Skunk became lost.’, providing more description of this event:

(13) laqay laqay taypi-ru-y  
 ruins ruins center-ALL-EXC  
 ‘Between the ruins.’ [3+4]

(14) suma laq’u-y thaqa-sina-y  
 good worm-EXC search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good worms.’ [5+6]

The next stanza using this structure occurs only later, with stanza [17+18]:

(15) jaka.n wira-y amta-sina-y  
 eternal life-EXC remember-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When remembering eternal life.’ [17+18]

#### 4.2 Semantic coupling Method 2: Lines in a stanza differ only with regards to a single root

The second structure involves lines that differ only with regards to a root. Although this may sound relatively straight-forward, the varieties of stanzas and their structure in the method varies. This variation can be classified according to three parameters, the number of words used in forming the octosyllabic line, the part of speech of the root which varies, and the position of the root which varies. The only word that never alternates in the semantic couplet is the modifier. In the table below, copied from Table 4, the stanzas that use Method 1 are in darkened rows. The remaining stanza, with no shading, use Method 2. In these rows, the part of speech of the word (modifier, noun, or verb) which is the alternating word in the stanza appears in bold.

---

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, there is a lot of repetition in this song, reminding the authors of Turino’s (1989) description of Aymara musical (and culinary) productions as “small variations placed against the backdrop of cyclical repetition”.

Stanza	Word 1	Word 2	Word 3
[1+2]	N	V	
[3+4]	N	N	N
[5+6]	MOD	N	N
[7+8]	N	V	
[9+10]	MOD	N	N
[11+12]	N	N	V
[13+14]	N	V	
[15+16]	N	V	
[17+18]	MOD	N	V
[19]	V	V	
[20+21]	MOD	N	V

**Table 5.** Couplet Formation Methods Per Stanza (Method 1, That Is, Identical Lines in Stanzas, Highlighted in Darker Rows).

Let us start by analyzing the couplets formed with Method 2 of the type N+V. Here we see that the verb can alternate, as in stanzas [1+2] and [7+8], the noun can alternate as in stanza [15+16], or both the noun and verb can alternate as in [13+14]. To begin, let us examine stanzas like [1+2], which is comprised of two N+V lines, identical save for an alternating verb root, in bold.

(16) *aña-sita-w*                      ***jiwa***-*tayna-y*  
 skunk-DIM-DECL      die-3REM-EXC  
 ‘Skunk died.’ [1]

*aña-sita-y*                      ***chaqa***-*tayna-y*  
 skunk-DIM-EXC      become.lost-3REM-EXC  
 ‘Skunk became lost.’ [2]

A similar stanza is provided in stanza [7+8], which likewise is of the N+V type and features alternation of the same two roots. Here, the morphology between line [7] and line [8] is not identical - the momentaneous *-t’a* is attested attaches to the verb *jiwa*- ‘die’ in [7] but not on the verb *chaqa*- ‘become lost’ in [8]. This stanza also differs from [1+2] insofar as here the singer includes the audience, using the inclusive form of ‘we’ in the verbal inflection. This overtly expresses the analogy between Little Skunk’s death (in the remote, narrative past in [1+2]) and our own death (in the so-called “simple”, unmarked tense):

(17) *Uk-jam-pun-jay*  
 that-CP-EMP-EXC

***jiw***-*t’a-wj-ch-itan*.  
 die-M-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
 ‘Just like that do we die.’ [7]



Uk-jam-pun-jay  
that-CP-EMP-EXC

**chaqa**-wj-ch-itan.  
become.lost-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
'Just like that do we become lost.' [8]

The stanza in [15+16] is also N+V, as [1+2] and [7+8], but distinct from those, in this stanza, it is the noun, rather than the verb, which alternates.

(18) **Tayka**-n-ipa-n-s                      may-t'a-sitan.  
mother-ATT-SUBR-AD              loan-M-3>1FUT  
'And having a mother may it loan her.' [15]

**Awki**-n-ipa-n-s                      may-t'a-sitan  
father-ATT-SUBR-AD              loan-M-3>1FUT  
'And having a father may it loan him.' [16]

The meanings of these lines are difficult to interpret without the preceding stanza in [13+14]. Let us examine those stanzas presently, in 19. This stanza is particularly interesting because it is also N+V, but here, both the noun and the verb alternate, while the morphology attached to the noun and root remains identical:

(19) **Thuqu**-ña-sti  
dance-ANMZ-IRR  
  
**awki**-n-irki-t?  
father-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
'Does dance have a father?' [13]

**Wirsu**-ña-sti  
song-ANMZ-IRR  
  
**tayka**-n-irki-t?  
mother-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
'Does song have a mother?' [14]

We will return to a more thorough semantic analysis treating the relation between mother/father and song/dance in the next section. First, it is worthwhile to complete the analysis of this semantic coupling method by studying lines comprised of three words. Such lines are one of three types: MOD+N+N (stanza [9+10]), N+N+V (stanza [11+12]), or MOD+N+V (stanza [20+21]). As the examples below show, the difference between stanza [9+10] and [11+12] is minimal. Both involve alternations between *wirsu*- 'sing' and *thuqa*- 'dance'. However, in the former couplet *thuqa*- is nominalized with the subordinator, and so consequently it must be analyzed as nominal. Note, too, the morphological difference

between [11] and [12], which mirrors that previously mentioned between [7] and [8] insofar as the momentaneous *-t'a* appears in the first but not the second verb in the couplet.

- (20) Suma     **wirsu-ñ**  
           good    sing-ANMZ.ACC

thaqa-sina-y  
 search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good song.’ [9]

- Suma     **thuqu-ñ**  
           good    dance-ANMZ.ACC

thaqa-sina-y  
 search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good dance.’ [10]

- (21) Jiwa-ñ            jaka-ñ  
       die-ANMZ        live-ANMZ

**wirs-t’a-jwa-tan**  
 sing-M-BFR-1INCL.SIM  
 ‘We sing death and life.’ [11]

- Jiwa-ñ            jaka-ñ  
       die-ANMZ        live-ANMZ

**thuqu-wa-tan**  
 dance-bfr-1incl.sim  
 ‘We dance death and life.’ [12]

The final three-word semantic couplet formed according to structure 2 is the MOD+N+V type in stanza [20+21], in example (22), comprising the final stanza of the song:

- (22) Aka-y     **kall-sa-y**  
       this-EXC    street-AD-EXC

pist’a-y-ka-tan.  
 miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
 ‘We will miss even this street.’ [20]

- Aka-y     **wirsa-s**  
       this-EXC    life-AD

pist'a-y-ka-tan.

miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT

'We will miss even this life.' [21]

## 5. Semantic motifs

Having described the methods used to organize octosyllabic lines into stanzas as semantic couplets in the Añasita song, it is now opportune to focus on the semantic motifs that give the song its meaning. Even if translation and linguistic analyses are relatively straight-forward for this song, the interpretation of verbal art in general presents unique difficulties because of the use of literary devices like ambiguities, indirectness, and obscurity (Fabb 2017: 457, cf. "relevance theory" in Sperber & Wilson 1990). In this contribution, we do not attempt to interpret the meaning of the song as a whole because it would be outside of the intended scope. Nonetheless, we can make some structural observations related to meaning. For example, repetition of the linguistic contexts of the words equates the semantically related roots, bringing attention to the similarities and differences between them (Jakobson 1932). In this article, we refer to the opposition of these semantically related roots as "semantic motifs". Note that the semantic similarities and differences within and between couplets are also highlighted with the melody. Within the stanza of a couplet, a similar melody allows the listener to focus on the linguistic differences in the semantic motif. Comparatively, there is a different melody in a following couplet, underscoring a different semantic motif.

Recall that in the introduction to section 4, we mentioned how in some cases the semantic coupling resembled that attested by Mannheim (1987) for a Quechua waynu, where the pair differs "by a single semantic property" and according to which the order in which the two words occur is "regulated by a hierarchy of values for the semantic property, which distinguishes the word pair" (276). Mannheim (*ibid.*) gives the example of the semantic pair *munay* 'desire' and *waylluy*, which has a similar meaning but, crucially, with a comparatively narrower semantic range. He represents this relationship (following Jakobson 1932, 1936 and Waugh 1982) as a set of concentric circles as in Figure 5 where {f} designates the intensional semantic properties of the first word as well as more specific specifications, abbreviated as {g}. While both *munay* and *waylluy* can express the meaning {f}, the latter is a semantically marked for {g}.

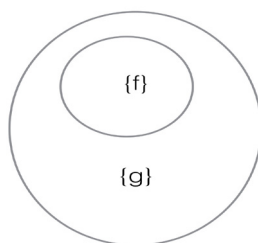


Figure 5. Representation of Semantic Pair

This analysis holds for the first and last of the couplets of the song. The first is *jiwa*- ‘die’ and *chaqa*- ‘become lost’. Here, the semantic range of *chaqa*- ‘become lost’ extends also to ‘die’ (see subsection 5.1). The final couplet of the song likewise is comprised of the noun pair *wira* ‘life’ and *kalli* ‘street’ (loanwords from Spanish, *vida* and *calle*, respectively). Here, *kalli* can be used metaphorically for ‘life’, but not vice-versa (see subsection 5.4).

However, we do not construe the other two semantic pairs as being in this relation. Instead, they seem to express some kind of opposition. In this sense they may be said to involve a phenomena documented by Urton in Quechua known as *yanantin* and *iskaynintin*, the “imperative forces that ‘urge’ the linkage of things considered to have a natural, complementary relationship to each other” (1997: 78).<sup>6</sup> In subsection 5.2, *wirsu* and *thuqu* used as nouns or verbs contrast ‘song’ and ‘dance’ and ‘sing’ and ‘dance’. Similarly, in subsection 5.3, *awki* ‘father’ and *tayka* ‘mother’ are contrasted. Bear in mind that not all repetitions in the song are considered motifs. Namely, those that do not form a couplet according to structure 2. Consider, for example, the use of the verb *thaqa*- ‘search’. We first find this verb in couplet [5+6] (structure 1) which describes the context in which skunk dies. Later, in couplet [9+10] (structure 2), this same verb describes the contexts in which the listeners, too, may die. See examples 23 and 24. Although the act of searching connects the first part of the song, which describes skunks’ untimely demise, with the second part, which describes the death of the listeners of the song, we do not consider ‘search’ as a semantic motif of the song insofar as it does not participate in any alternations indicative of structure 2.

- (23) suma    laq’u-y        **thaqa**-sina-y  
       good    worm-EXC    search-SUBR-EXC  
       ‘When searching for good words.’ [5+6]

- (24) suma    wirsu-ñ  
       good    sing-ANMZ.ACC

**thaqa**-sina-y  
 search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good song.’ [9]

suma thuqu-ñ  
 good dance-ANMZ.ACC

**thaqa**-sina-y  
 search-SUBR-EXC  
 ‘When searching for good dance.’ [10]

<sup>6</sup> See also reference to complementary in Quechua verse described by Pigott (2013).

## 5.1 Motif 1: die / become lost

The motif die / become lost is evident in the stanzas [1+2] and [7+8], provided in 25 and 26, respectively, both of which use the second method of semantic couplet formation (with the alternating word in bold):

- (25) Aña-sita-w            **jiwa**-tayna-y  
 skunk-DIM-DECL    die-3REM-EXC  
 ‘Skunk died.’ [1]

Aña-sita-y            **chaqa**-tayna-y  
 skunk-DIM-DECL    become.lost-3REM-EXC  
 ‘Skunk became lost.’ [2]

- (26) Uk-jam-pun-jay  
 that-CP-EMP-EXC

**jiw**-t’a-wj-ch-itan  
 die-M-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
 ‘Just like that do we die.’ [7]

Uk-jam-pun-jay  
 that-CP-EMP-EXC

**chaqa**-wj-ch-itan  
 become.lost-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
 ‘Just like that do we become lost.’ [8]

In Aymara, the word *jiwa*- ‘die’ can be coarse, especially when speaking about the death of a loved one. Speakers, then, tend to opt to use the verb *chaqa*- ‘become lost’ as a metaphor to express a similar meaning in a gentler way. This may seem familiar to speakers of European languages where the expression “to lose someone” can more kindly convey that an individual has died. Aymara examples from natural language follows in 27 and 28:

- (27) Wawa-pa-x  
 child-3POSS-TOP

**chaqa**-ta-wjwa-ras  
 become.lost-RE-BFR-CFY  
 ‘His child indeed became lost (i.e. died).’

- (28) Warmi-x            **chaqa**-t  
 wife-1POSS        become.lost-RE

q'awa pampa-n-ka-ki-jwa-tayna-w  
 ravine pampa-GEN/LOC-GEN/LOC.VBZ-DL-BFR-3DIS-DECL  
 'My wife, lost (i.e. dead), she was just on the ravine pampa.'

Similarly, in traditional dream analysis, becoming lost in an egg is an omen that the individual in question will soon die:

(29) Samka-ja-n tata.la-xa-x  
 dream-1POSS-GEN/LOC dad-1POSS-TOP

ma p'ya-ru-w  
 one egg-ALL-DECL

**chaqa**-wjw-i-x  
 become.lost-BFR-3SIM-TOP  
 'In my dream, my dad became lost in an egg.'

While *chaqa*- 'become lost' can be used to refer to dying,<sup>7</sup> it is not the case that *jiwa*- 'die' can be used with a meaning like 'become lost'. The word *jiwa*- is only attested with the meaning of 'die'.

(30) Lur-ir sar-ka-ñ-kama-x  
 work-ag go-ncpl-anmz-li-top

**jiwa**-wjwa-tayn.  
 die-cpl-3dis  
 'Just as he was going to work, she died.'

(31) Kullak-ita-xa-x jicha-cha-ki-w  
 sister-dim.fem-1poss-top now-dm-dl-decl

**jiwa**-tata-s.k-i-x.  
 die-prp-prog-3sim-top  
 'My grandmother just now is dying.'

Clearly, then, it is not the case that 'die' and become lost' have an identical meaning in these contexts – but there are some similarities. This relationship calls to mind what Mannheim (1998: 248) identified as a "stereoscopic after-sensation" i.e. referring to the same state of affairs from different perspectives, without requiring lexical or grammatical repetition. in the sense of Boodberg (1979 [1955]:185; cf. Fox 1977: 72).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, *chaqa*- 'become lost' can also be used to express that the subject is present but not perceived, as in (i), in which the speaker's sister is no longer visible after turning a corner.

## 5.2 Motif 2: song / dance (sing / dance)

The second motif is between the nouns song and dance and the verbs sing and dance. As such noun/verb pairs are formed on the basis of the same root, which could be nominal or verbal depending on the morphology which attaches, we can treat them as members the same motif. This motif is apparent in stanzas [9+10] (as nouns), [11+12] (as verbs), and [13+14] (as nouns). The transcription for lines 9-14 appears in example 32.

(32) Suma    **wirsu**-ñ            thaqa-sina-y  
       good    sing-ANMZ.ACC    search-SUBR-EXC  
       ‘When searching for good song.’ [9]

Suma    **thuqu**-ñ            thaqa-sina-y  
       good    dance-ANMZ.ACC    search-SUBR-EXC  
       ‘When searching for good dance.’ [10]

Jiwa-ñ    jaka-ñ    **wirs**-t’a-jwa-tan  
       die-ANMZ    live-ANMZ    sing-M-BFR-1INCL.SIM  
       ‘We sing death and life.’ [11]

Jiwa-ñ    jaka-ñ    **thuqa**-wa-tan  
       die-ANMZ    live-ANMZ    dance-bfr-1incl.sim  
       ‘We dance death and life.’ [12]

**Thuqu**-ña-sti    awki-n-irki-t?  
       dance-ANMZ-IRR    father-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
       ‘Does dance have a father?’ [13]

**Wirsu**-ña-sti    tayka-n-irki-t  
       song-ANMZ-IRR    mother-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
       ‘Does song have a mother?’ [14]

This motif is also evident in line [19] (where the two words in question appear as verbs), the only line which is not part of a stanza.

(33) Wirs-t’a-wa-tan    thuq-t’a-wa-tan  
       sing-M-BFR-1INC.SIM    dance-M-BFR-1INC.SIM  
       ‘We sing and dance.’ [19]

## 5.3 Motif 3 mother / father

The motif of mother / father appears in two couplets, even co-occurring with motif 2, as in [13+14] and [15+16]. The transcription for the lines [13-16] appear in example 34.

- (34) Thuqu-ña-sti      **awki**-n-irki-t?  
 dance-ANMZ-IRR      father-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
 ‘Does dance have a father?’ [13]

Wirsu-ña-sti      **tayka**-n-irki-t  
 song-ANMZ-IRR      mother-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
 ‘Does song have a mother?’ [14]

**Tayka**-n-ipa-s      may-t’a-sitan.  
 mother-ATT-SUBR-AD      loan-M-3>1FUT  
 ‘And having a mother may it loan her to us.’ [15]

**Awki**-n-ipa-s      may-t’a-sitan  
 father-ATT-SUBR-AD      loan-M-3>1FUT  
 ‘And having a father may it loan him to us.’ [16]

#### 5.4 Motif 4 street / life

The final stanza [20+21], example 35, contains a motif that occurs only once in the song, that between street and life:

- (35) aka-y      **kall**-sa-y  
 this-EXC      street-AD-EXC
- pist’a-y-ka-tan  
 miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
 ‘We will miss even this street.’ [20]
- aka-y      **wir**-s      pist’a-y-ka-tan  
 this-EXC      life.ACC-AD      miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
 ‘We will miss even this life.’ [21]

This couplet is the only one which has a Spanish loanword as the motif, *kalli* < *calle* ‘street’ and *wira* < *vida* ‘life’. As Pigott suggests in his analysis of a Quechua song, the contrast between the Aymara and Spanish is also a kind of complementarity. Speakers make recourse to the extra linguistic resources to “create special poetic and expressive-communicative effects” (Julca-Guerrero 2009: 69).

Similar to motif 1, with die/become lost, life can be understood metaphorically as a street, but not the reverse. This metaphor is also evident in many European languages: “life is path”, “the road of life”, etc.

This final stanza, on life, complements the first stanza, on death, giving the structure of the entire song a semantic balance.



## 6. Concluding remarks: Semantic couplets and categories

We illustrated how a study of verbal art can be a heuristic for linguistic analysis through a study of the structure of the Añasita song, in Muylaq' Aymara. Our analysis shows some semantic categories of language that would not be apparent in a traditional linguistic analysis. A “literal” translation of Aymara to English entails a denotational reduction that would fail to account for the interplay between form and meaning in the couplets. Translation must not be reduced to establishing mere denotational equivalences. Instead, we must consider linguistic and cognitive evidence that is “embedded in the contexts of use and lexical and indexical relationships”; tied as much to practice as to pragmatics (see Mannheim’s 2015 account of “radical translation”). Rigorous, scientific analyses of verbal art require consideration of how meaning is constructed through practice and dialog, obliging linguists and anthropologists to consider more than grammatical accounts and dictionary translations.

We briefly compared aspects of Aymara and Quechua verbal art. We used Mannheim’s “hierarchy of values”, that governs the motifs in semantic couplets. In Quechua semantic couplets, one of the two terms is marked in regard to the other, with the unmarked term (almost) always appearing in the first line of the couplet, and the marked one in the second. We note that in the Añasita song, the order of the pair stems *wirsu-/thuqu-* [sing, dance] and *awki/tayka* [father/mother]) vary freely. Apparently no relationship of markedness governs their distribution.

From a musical perspective, the musical analysis of the Añasita song extends the form assessments. The melodic and rhythmic structure underline some aspects of the narrative (e.g. the conclusion). Moreover, the different semantic motifs between couplets are also highlighted with the melody. Within the stanza of a couplet, a similar melody allows the listener to focus on the linguistic differences in a particular semantic motif. Comparatively, there is a different melody in a following couplet, underscoring a different semantic motif. Finally, we also showed that the rhythmic transcription can hardly be achieved from a strict European perspective. In this work, the analysis of dance footfall rhythm was necessary to guide a decision on the transcription of the time structure. This confirms the requirement of multiple perspectives, particularly the native one, to provide a thorough analysis.

Much work remains to be done to better understand Aymara, and, more broadly, Andean and Amerindian verbal art. In a way analogous to how a linguistic analysis of the couplets yields insight into semantic categories, so too does a footfall- and, possibly, clap-based analyses show how musical structure can be more comprehensively represented through embodied practice. To address these, and other issues, we are convinced of the value of multidisciplinary, practice-based approaches that involve collaborating with indigenous community members and combining expertise in linguistics, ethnomusicology, and anthropology. As examples, consider the fascinating work on the “transformational nexus between singing and weaving ... evident in a range of cultural practices” (our translation) amongst the Aymara women of Qaqachaka, who use song as a mnemonic device to recall textile designs and part of the process of creating new textile designs (Arnold & Yapita 1998), and Turino’s analysis of how the pragmatics of Aymara worldview and social style inform musical performance (1989). After all, verbal art is not a discrete

object of study, but, like speech and music acts, is an embodied dynamic interaction, which is at once an aesthetic experience and a multisensorial (Classen 1990) cultural production. Comparative work across Aymara varieties, especially that collaboratively performed with native speakers, could extend also to other Andean languages and shed light on interpretation, semantic categories, musical structure, and the interplay between Aymara, Andean, and indigenous speech, music, and culture.

**Appendix 1: Complete transcription of the song**

A complete transcription of the song with linguistic analysis and English translation appears below. After each translation appears the line number in brackets, as referred to in the text. When a line repeats, two consecutive numbers appear in the bracket, to save space.

Aña-sita-w           jiwa-tayna-y.  
skunk-DIM-DECL   die-3REM-EXC  
'The skunk died.' [1]

aña-sita-y           chaqa-tayna-y  
skunk-DIM-EXC   become.lost-3REM-EXC  
'Skunk became lost.' [2]

laqay   laqay   taypi-ru-y  
ruins   ruins   center-ALL-EXC  
'Between the ruins.' [3+4]

suma   laq'u-y       thaqa-sina-y  
good   worm-EXC   search-SUBR-EXC  
'When searching for good worms.' [5+6]

Uk-jam-pun-jay   jiw-t'a-wj-ch-itan.  
that-CP-EMP-EXC   die-M-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
'Just like that do we die.' [7]

Uk-jam-pun-jay   chaqa-wj-ch-itan.  
that-CP-EMP-EXC   become.lost-BFR-CAUS-1INC.SIM  
'Just like that do we become lost.' [8]

Suma   wirsu-ñ           thaqa-sina-y  
good   sing-ANMZ.ACC   search-SUBR-EXC  
'When searching for good song.' [9]

Suma   thuqu-ñ           thaqa-sina-y  
good   dance-ANMZ.ACC   search-SUBR-EXC  
'When searching for good dance.' [10]

Jiwa-ñ   jaka-ñ       wirs-t'a-jwa-tan  
die-ANMZ   live-ANMZ   sing-M-BFR-1INCL.SIM  
'We sing death and life.' [11]

Jiwa-ñ   jaka-ñ       thuqu-wa-tan  
die-ANMZ   live-ANMZ   dance-bfr-1incl.sim  
'We dance death and life.' [12]

Thuqu-ña-sti      awki-n-irki-t?  
dance-ANMZ-IRR    father-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
'Does dance have a father?' [13]

Wirsu-ña-sti      tayka-n-irki-t  
song-ANMZ-IRR    mother-ATT-3PRES.CF-NEG/IRR  
'Does song have a mother?' [14]

Tayka-n-ipan-s      may-t'a-sitan.  
mother-ATT-SUBR-AD    loan-M-3>1FUT  
'And having a mother may it loan her to us.' [15]

Awki-n-ipan-s      may-t'a-sitan  
father-ATT-SUBR-AD    loan-M-3>1FUT  
'And having a father may it loan him to us.' [16]

jaka.n    wira-y    amta-sina-y  
eternal    life-EXC    remember-SUBR-EXC  
'When remembering eternal life.' [17+18]

Wirs-t'a-wa-tan      thuq-t'a-wa-tan  
sing-M-BFR-1INC.SIM    dance-M-BFR-1INC.SIM  
'We sing and dance.' [19]

aka-y      kall-sa-y      pist'a-y-ka-tan  
this-EXC    street-AD-EXC    miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
'We will miss even this street.' [20]

aka-y      wir-s      pist'a-y-ka-tan  
this-EXC    life.ACC-AD    miss-CAUS-NCPL-1INCL.FUT  
'We will miss even this life.' [21]

## Appendix 2: complete transcription of the song

Voice

A ña si taw ji wa tay nay

A ña si tay cha qa tay nay La qay la qay tay pi ruy

La quay la qay tay pi ruy Su ma laq' uy tha qa si nay

Su ma laq' uy tha qa si nay U kham pun jay jivt' aw chi tan

U kham pun jay cha qaw jchi tan Su ma wir suñ tha qa si nay

Su ma thu quñ tha qa si nay Ji wa ñ ja kañ wirst' aj wa tan

Ji wa ñ ja kañ thu qa wa tan Thu qu ña sti aw ki nir kit?

Wir su ña sti tay ka nir kit? Tay ka ni pans mayt' a si tan

Aw ki ni pans mayt' a si tan Ja kan wi ray am ta si nay

Ja kan wi ray am ta si nay Wirst' a wa tan thuqt' a wa tan

A kay kall sy pist' ay ka tan A ka wi ras pist' ay ka tan

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